



**STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**

**Public Hearing Testimony
Public Health Committee
March 18, 2015**



**GOVERNOR'S BILL NO. 6856 AN ACT CONCERNING SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND OPIOID
OVERDOSE PREVENTION**

The Department of Children and Families **supports** Bill No. 6856, An Act Concerning Substance Abuse and Opioid Overdose Prevention.

This bill, introduced by Governor Malloy, is the product of a coordinated effort from the Departments of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS), Public Health (DPH), Consumer Protection (DCP), Children and Families (DCF) and the Governor's Office, working in partnership with law enforcement, medical professionals, private providers and other key stakeholders. The bill provides necessary education for physicians and other medical professionals regarding prescription drug abuse. It requires needed review of patient records when large doses of opioids, are prescribed and ensures that prescribers have real-time data to make their treatment decisions. It also increases access to NARCAN, an opioid-overdose reversal drug, by allowing pharmacists, after being training and certified by DCP, the ability to prescribe it. Finally, the bill makes revisions to the composition of the Alcohol and Drug Policy Council. These policy initiatives align with efforts underway in the Northeast to respond strategically to the growing national trend on increased prescription drug abuse, especially opioids, for our corner of the country.

DCF endorses the efforts to improve responsible prescribing practices contained in sections 1 through 7 of the bill. We know that young persons report that access to prescription drugs is readily available. They report easy access to prescriptions primarily through people giving them extra prescriptions belonging to family or friends, purchasing them, stealing them or using their own prescriptions. Reducing access to a substance is an effective prevention strategy for youth, especially with opioids, which have very high addiction potential.

We applaud DMHAS' ongoing efforts to make NARCAN available in the community. Section 6 of the bill provides language expanding the scope of practice for pharmacists, allowing them to prescribe NARCAN and administer training on its safe and effective use. NARCAN is a proven, life-saving medication that has saved the lives of numerous individuals in Connecticut and this measure will make this life-saving medication more readily available to the public.

As co-chairs of the Alcohol and Drug Policy Council (ADPC), DCF supports updating the membership to reflect the current stakeholders in Connecticut who should be involved in these efforts. We believe that the modifications to the membership of the ADPC in section 9 will ensure that the key stakeholders are around to the table to help guide Connecticut addiction services policy.